Exemption from environmental Protection Laws

1008. SHRI SOM PAL : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that Government can exempt Governmental and semi-Governmental bodies and local authorities etc. from the gambit of environmental protection laws :

(b) if so, what is the rationale thereof and what is the list of bodies that have been accorded such exemption;

(c) whether the existing laws including the exemptive provisions, meet the requirements of the decision taken in this regard at the Rio Conference in 1992;

(d) if not, what changes in the existing legislation are being contemplated to bring them in line with Rio decisions; and

(e) whether the departmental standing committee too has made such a recommendation, if so, what action has been taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) to (c) There is an enabling provision under the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 wherein the Central Government can give conditional exemption by notification from the operation of certa in provisions of the Act. However, so far the Government has not given exemption to any unit. The exemption is envisaged to guard the information on processes and technology of certain sensitive units like nuclear and defence installations of national interest. The existing Environmental Laws are in conformity with the requirements of the Rio declaration.

(d) The Ministry is carrying out an exercise to integrate all the major environmental laws to remove ambiguity, overlapping, and multiplicity to achieve the objective of environment protection envisaged in our National Conservation Strategy.

(e) The Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee has recommended the delection of exemption clause from the proposed National Environment Tribunal Bill, 1992, which is pending for consideration and passing in the Parliament.

Pollution in Yamuna

1009. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH :
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a report published in the Economic Times of 17th January, 1994 captioned 'Polluted Yamuna, a time Bomb for Delhi;

(b) if so, what are the facts and details in this regard;

(c) whether the increasing effluents from industries mushrooming in cities and townships along its course in U.P. and Haryana, have reduced the river Yamuna to a huge sewer;

(d) whether it is a fact that the national capital has to bear the maximum damage and the river is fast becoming the metropoli's drain of sorrow;

(e) if so, what are the facts and details in this regard; and

(f) what steps Government have taken or propose to take to check the pollution in the river Yamuna and to save the lives of people living in Delhi and other towns ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yamuna river is heavily polluted due to discharge of partly treated or untreated domestic waste water and industrial effluents particularly along the city limits of Delhi, Mathura and Agra. Very scanty flow of water in Yamuna has compounded the pollution problem. The Government has identified 17 categories of highly polluting industries for taking priority action to comply with the prescribed standards. The status of pollution control compliance as on 31 December, 1993 in the medium and large-scale indusrial units of these categories, as given by the Governments of Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, is given in the enclosed statement.

(d) and (e) In Delhi, about 2000 million litres of domestic waste water is generated per day against which the present installed capacity of treatment is 1270 million litres per day. About 220 million litres per day of this